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TAGS: SOPN, IS
SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE, JUNE 11, 1981
1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ARTICLE BY FLORA LEWIS ON NEW YORK TIMES OPED PAGE JUNE 22.
2. BEGIN TEXT
DECISION FOR ISRAELIS (BY FLORA LEWIS)
PARIS, JUNE 21 -- ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE ISRAELI RAID ON IRAQ'S NUCLEAR REACTOR AND THE INTERNATIONAL FALLOUT ARE OBSCURING MORE DECISIVE ISSUES.
A WEEK FROM TUESDAY, ISRAEL IS GOING TO ELECT A NEW KNESSET AND THEREBY CHOOSE ITS LEADER FOR PERHAPS THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. THESE ARE CRUCIAL YEARS THAT MAY WELL RESULT IN
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ISRAEL'S FUTURE IN PEACE OR THE GRAVEST DAMAGE NOT ONLY TO THE JEWISH STATE BUT TO MOST OF THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES.
CONVENTION HAS IT THAT ONLY THOSE WITH THE RIGHT TO VOTE SHOULD INTERFERE IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS. THIS IS REGULARLY HONORED MORE IN THE BREACH THAN IN THE OBSERVANCE, THOUGH WITH A DEGREE OF DIFFIDENCE.
THUS THE LATE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER GOLDA MEIR DID ALL SHE COULD SHORT OF OPEN DECLARATIONS TO HELP RICHARD NIXON WIN RE-ELECTION IN 1972. GERMANY'S HELMUT SCHMIDT CAME OUT AGAINST JIMMY CARTER IN 1976. IN FRENCH ELECTIONS OF 1974 AND 1981, MOSCOW SIDED WITH VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING, THE LOSING SIDE THIS TIME.
BUT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN OUTSIDERS HAVE SO MUCH AT STAKE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY'S ELECTIONS THAT EVEN A PRETENSE OF NONINTERFERENCE MUST BE ABANDONED. I THINK THAT IS THE CASE WITH ISRAEL NOW.
LEAVING ASIDE THE RAID AND ITS BLATANTLY ELECTORAL TIMING, MENACHEM BEGIN'S CONTINUANCY IN POWER WOULD BE TOO MUCH OF A RISK FOR THE WORLD AT LARGE, AS WELL AS FOR ISRAEL, TO

CONTEMPLATE WITHOUT CLEAR COMMENT.
MR. BEGIN IS A STUBBORN, NARROW-MINDED MAN WHOSE VISION IS LIMITED TO DENOUNCING THE PAST. AS MUCH AS ISRAEL'S FIRST PRIME MINISTER DAVID BEN GURION USED HIS DARING AND RESOLVE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE, MR. BEGIN USES HIS GREAT POLITICAL SKILL AND STAMINA TO DENY IT. HIS EXTRAORDINARY STATEMENT, IN CONNECTION WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S DEALING WITH SAUDI ARABIA ON MORE MODEST TERMS THAN DOES THE U.S. OR FRANCE, THAT ALL GERMANS ARE AND ALWAYS WILL BE GUILTY

OF THE HOLOCAUST WAS PATHETICALLY REVEALING OF MENTAL BLOCKAGE.
MENACHEM BEGIN HAS ONE GREAT ACHIEVEMENT TO HIS CREDIT--PEACE WITH EGYPT.
IN DOMESTIC TERMS, HE HAS BEEN A DISASTER, WITH SKYROCKETING INFLATION AND NOW THE INCREDIBLY UGLY SIGHT OF SOME OF HIS NORTH AFRICAN JEWISH SUPPORTERS LAUCHING VIOLENT ATTACKS ON OPPOSITION PARTY MEETINGS.
EVEN THE PEACE WITH EGYPT WAS WANTING, FLAWED IN THE STINGY FOCUS ON LEGALISMS AND FAILURE TO MATCH THE COURAGEOUS INITIATIVE OF ANWAR SADAT WITH A GESTURE OF SPIRIT. A FARSIGHTED STATESMAN, WITH PEACE FOR HIS COUNTRY AS HIS GREATEST GOAL, WOULD HAVE FOLLOWED THE TREATY IMMEDIATELY WITH SOME UNILATERAL MEASURES STARTING THE WEST BANK ON THE ROAD TO AUTONOMY.
MR. BEGIN INSISTED THAT ISRAEL SHOULD NOT GIVE SOMETHING FOR NOTHING, AS THOUGH COMMUNAL GOOD WILL WERE NOTHING, AND THE HAGGLING NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BOGGED DOWN IN STERILITY. THE RESULT IS THAT THE DISTRESSED ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ARE NOW MORE HOSTILE TO ISRAEL, MORE SUPPORTIVE OF THE P.L.O., MORE OPPOSED TO THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT THAN EVER. THEY COULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN HOPE OF ACCOMMODATION. THEY COULD HAVE COME TO SEE SADAT AS THE MAN WHO MADE THE BREAKTHROUGH FOR THEM TOO, AND THE ARAB RADICALS WHO USE THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE AS COVER COULD HAVE BEEN MORE ISOLATED.
INSTEAD, EGYPT IS ISOLATED AND ISRAEL IS DANGEROUSLY ALONE. THERE IS A WATERSHED DATE AHEAD: APRIL 1982, WHEN THE REST OF THE SINAI IS TO BE RETURNED TO EGYPT. MR. SADAT IS WAITING PATIENTLY BUT AFTERWARDS HE MUST BE EXPECTED TO TRY TO REPAIR HIS RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER

ARABS.
IT IS COMMON TALK IN WESTERN CHANCELLERIES THAT IF THINGS GO ON AS THEY ARE, AFTER NEXT APRIL THERE WILL BE A CHANGE IN EGYPTIAN POLICY TO ISRAEL'S SERIOUS DETRIMENT.
MR. BEGIN TRADED THE SINAI FOR PEACE WITH EGYPT, BUT HIS

SUBSEQUENT POLICIES CAN LOSE HIM THE BENEFITS OF PEACE AS WELL AS THE BUFFER TERRITORY.
THE PITY IS ALL THE GREATER BECAUSE OTHER MEN INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS DEVELOPED WARM RELATIONS THAT GIVE LIVE MEANING TO A PIECE OF PAPER. THIS COMES ACROSS IN THE NEW BOOK BY EZER WEIZMAN, MENACHEM BEGIN'S FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER. DESPITE HIS TERRIBLE TEMPER, MR. WEIZMAN BECAME FIRM FRIENDS WITH ANWAR SADAT AND HIS THEN DEFENSE MINISTER, MOHAMMED EL-GAMASY.
BUT THE MEN GO AND THEIR FRIENDSHIPS GO WITH THEM IF THEY ARE NOT BROADENED AND ENLARGED, THREATENING ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MIDDLE EAST. IF CONCILLIATION CAN'T BE SPREAD, WAR CAN SPREAD, TO ENGULF EVERYONE.
MR. BEGIN DOESN'T THINK THIS WAY. HE HUNKERS DOWN IN HIS CORNER, BLASTING THE WORLD WITH WORDS AND BOMBS, AND IT BRINGS HIM A CERTAIN POPULARITY AMONG FRIGHTENED ISRAELIS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN OFFERED A MORE HOPEFUL, STIRRING GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE.
IT ISN'T TOO LATE FOR ISRAEL TO TURN BACK TO A MORE PROMISING COURSE. BUT IT IS TOO LATE TO SUPPOSE THAT MENACHEM BEGIN'S NATURE WILL ENABLE HIM TO LEAD THE WAY. THERE ARE NO NEW BEN GURIONS ON THE ISRAELI HORIZON, BUT

THERE IS A CHOICE IN ISRAEL NEXT WEEK BETWEEN PLUNGING BLINDLY TOWARD CATASTROPHE OR AVERTING IT. IT IS TOO IMPORTANT FOR ISRAEL'S OWN SAKE AND FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD TO LET PARTISAN EMOTIONS OF THE MOMENT BLACK OUT THE FUTURE. END TEXT. STOESSEL